

Secret Agents and the Memory of Everyday Collaboration in Communist Eastern Europe

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and James Mark



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Chapter 15

Cooperation with State Security Services as a Means of Acquiring

Cultural and Social Capital

Unofficial Collaborators (IMs) Working in the Tourism Sector

Krisztina Slachta

In this chapter,¹ I analyse the collaboration with the state security services of the former socialist countries as a special type of accumulating social capital,² which could be referred to as “collaborational capital”. The interpretative framework of the capital theory of Bourdieu suggests that the activities of an unofficial collaborator could be interpreted as converting social capital which he had been accumulating during his cooperation with state security so as to attain a better social position. From this vantage point collaboration with one of the state security services can be viewed as an existential strategy of capital accumulation. If someone working as an agent was reliable and produced reports of high quality, this helped him to climb higher in his career as a civilian. Finally, he could use his cultural and social capital (i.e., his perfected language knowledge, expanded social network, higher working experiences) accumulated through years working for the state security as far as he could transform this capital on the market after the collapse of the Socialist regimes.

In Bourdieu’s definition “capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated’, embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.”³ Bourdieu also makes clear that “capital (...) in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate,”⁴ which is amply supported by the examples of the unofficial

collaborators. One form of cultural capital accumulation is the so-called incorporation of cultural capital which “presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor”⁵ – for example, through the time-consuming acquisition and bringing to a high level of proficiency of language skills. According to Bourieu’s theory, “social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various sense of the word.”⁶

As case studies I investigate the careers of two informers who worked in the tourist industry in socialist Hungary and East Germany. One of the informers was a full-time collaborator stationed at IBUSZ,⁷ the state-owned Hungarian travel agency, and working for the Hungarian state security, BM.⁸ The other was an unofficial collaborator and full-time informer for the East German state security (Stasi).⁹ Both men were employed as people who would observe their colleagues and, of course, all the tourists who had their holidays organized by the respective bureaus or who just spent free time in Hungary, at Lake Balaton for instance, or in other East Central European countries. The life courses I present, show how collaboration with the state security can be interpreted as a strategy of social, or in this specific cases as accumulation of “collaborational” capital. Both cases I analyze as examples feature a breadwinner of a family who decides to enter into service driven by existential considerations.

The two careers are not typical at all, not that one could define the “typical career of an informer.” Yet there are some interesting points on which to focus: how could one spend such a long period of one’s life collaborating with the state security? How did one work as a full-

time informer, and how was one able to organize one's (family's) whole life around this job?

What was the everyday life of a full-time informer like, and what does informing as a lifestyle mean?

The Hungarian informer officially started to work in Budapest at IBUSZ. From 1961 on, he was stationed in Vienna, in the first "Western" office of the company. Finally, in 1968, he became vice-president of the freshly opened IBUSZ office in Frankfurt and he seized the opportunity to cut off all connections with the Ministry of the Interior after sixteen years of steady collaboration, staying in West Germany with his whole family.

The East German full-time informer was directly employed by the Stasi for roughly ten years, after having become an unofficial collaborator in 1968. His (and his girlfriend's) job was to travel around East Central Europe and have six-week-long camping holidays at Lake Balaton so as to observe GDR tourists in the area. The last document in his files dates from December 1989. In it, he stated that he was breaking off his cooperation with the Stasi. He spent almost his entire life working directly for the MfS. His girlfriend became an unofficial collaborator too, since it was easier for them to organize their work and life this way.

Tourism Control by the Hungarian State Security

In the 1950s in Hungary, inbound tourism practically did not exist. One cannot really speak of domestic tourism either, especially not in comparison with the tendencies in the following decades. The number of Westerners coming to Hungary solely for the sake of spending their holidays was minimal. The overtly cautious attitude reflected the hysterical atmosphere characteristic of the Cold War, which created a general feeling of suspicion and fear from "Western imperialist spies and saboteurs," which, after 1956, shifted over to a fear of "reactionaries of the counter revolution."¹⁰

From 1957 on, views concerning tourism went through a gradual but steady change thanks to a shift in the attitude of the “old-new” party leadership, and, as a consequence, the attitudes of representatives of different national institutions, such as state security, border control, the police, but also people involved in urban development, public transport, planning and infrastructure. The development of tourism became a priority. “Opening towards the West” became a goal of utmost importance in the early 1960s, since it was seen as a potential means for the party to break out of its forced isolation.¹¹ The increasing number of Western tourists leaving Hungary with positive impressions and good memories seemed provide an ideal solution to ease the supposed tension issuing from “Cold War propaganda” attacking the country.¹² Parallel to this tendency, there was also a growing demand for extra profit produced by inbound-tourism-related currency flow.

State security control of tourism was the responsibility of the Department of counter-intelligence, which, in the aftermath of 1956, due to the worrisome increase in the number of inbound tourists (especially Westerners), had to face new problems concerning domestic surveillance of foreigners on holiday. In addition to police inspections of foreign tourists, Department III/II of the state security and its divisions specializing in counter-intelligence also had to deal with the observation of tourists entering Hungary legally.¹³

The control of foreigners arriving in the country in increasing numbers posed considerable challenges for the Hungarian intelligence service, as well as for border guard units. By 1961, specific measures had been taken to check the flow of incoming tourists. As a result, foreign relations of major state-owned organizations and companies came to be regulated,¹⁴ summary reports on any criminal offence committed by foreigners began to be issued,¹⁵ and the Minister of the Interior openly suggested “the organization of *social assistance* to help counter-intelligence, recruited from among the ranks of foreign citizens coming from Capitalist countries.”¹⁶

One finds recurring references over the course of the decades in official documents to the deliberate involvement of people working in the tourism sector in state security actions and counter-intelligence tasks, including employees of hotels and restaurants,¹⁷ people in middle management, etc. With respect to the aforementioned “social assistance,” IBUSZ was of key importance. Not only was the Hungarian direction of the travel service involved, IBUSZ guides stationed outside the country and people in management working at offices in Western Europe were subject to “obligatory” recruitment by the Hungarian state security.¹⁸

In this respect, the importance of the files containing reports written by employees of the IBUSZ offices in Vienna¹⁹ and Frankfurt (the latter was opened in 1968 as the first West German bureau of the company) is paramount.²⁰ These files shed light on the daily organization of tourism, as well as the relationship between IBUSZ administratives and representatives of local intelligence agencies.²¹

Cooperation with the State Security as a Possible Livelihood Strategy

Throughout the decades, we find recurring references in official documents to deliberate involving of people working in the tourism sector into state security actions and counter-intelligence tasks: employees of hotels and restaurants,²² middle management etc. With respect to the above mentioned “social assistance”, IBUSZ was of key importance: not only was the Hungarian direction of the travel service involved, but also IBUSZ guides stationed outside the country as well as the management working at outsourced offices in Western Europe were subject to “obligatory” recruitment by the Hungarian state security. More often than not the people were secretly “assistanting” the national cause, i. e., they helped the Ministry of the Interior’s work as informers. Since IBUSZ had monopoly over Hungarian tourism, it played a central role in observing and controlling in-coming and out-going Hungarian and foreign tourists.²³

The reports of undercover agent “Rounder” give a detailed overview of daily life at the IBUSZ offices in Vienna and Frankfurt. Rounder volunteered to serve the Hungarian state

security of his own accord in 1955. After the events of 1956, however, he contacted his former officer again, who, in 1959, gave a detailed report on Rounder's official affiliation, which by then had lasted almost four years.²⁴ The report reveals that in 1955, Mr. Ú. F.²⁵ worked as a part-time employee as the head of the postal division of Department VII of the Ministry of the Interior, that is, at the transport and communications department.²⁶ As a full-time employee, he worked for the Hungarian Philately Company,²⁷ where he reported regularly on his colleagues' foreign currency transactions and foreign exchange crimes. The Post was planning to open an office in Munich and put Ú. F. in charge. However, due to the revolution of 1956, the plan was not implemented.²⁸

In 1957, Rounder's case was passed over to Department III/II., to the intelligence service.²⁹ Originally, he would have been relocated to West Germany. Yet, Rounder refused to accept the appointment (which would have lasted several years), claiming that he did not wish to leave his family behind. According to the respective summary report on his career as an agent, Rounder was "politically reliable, apt to work as an agent, and fluent both in English and German."³⁰ Hungarian state security, especially counter-intelligence and secret intelligence, continuously had to grapple with the problem of finding agents who could be relied on in every way, who were capable of performing tasks undercover, and who spoke foreign languages, skills that were of crucial importance when it came to keeping Western tourists entering the country under observation.

In March 1959, Ú. F. accepted the repeated offers, using the code name "Kör Péter" ("Round Peter").³¹ Only later did the files reveal where "Kör Péter" worked. According to his reports, he was already stationed in Vienna by 1960. His files contained detailed accounts on owners and representatives of Austrian and West German travel agencies and their female companions who visited Budapest on a regular basis. "Kör Péter" was on an almost-first-name-basis with Mr. F., head of a West German travel agency which organized tours to

Hungary. The contents of the reports of agent “Kör Péter” suggest that his main tasks included the precise observation of inbound tourists whose suspicious behavior might have indicated hidden intentions of espionage and the detection of foreigners who could potentially be recruited by the Hungarian state security.³²

In the spring of 1961, IBUSZ decided to relocate “Kör Péter” permanently to the Vienna office: his reliability, outstanding language skills and precision in completing his tasks made the decision easy, and was met with the unanimous approval of his support officer and his superiors as well. The only flaws in his character were low-scale shady deals in which he engaged, giving in to the encouragement of his colleagues, and taking advantage of his trips abroad. Reports emphasized that his family life was content and he loved his children dearly. This made him seem even more reliable, since he had to leave his family behind, which constituted an important pledge of cooperation in the eyes of state security.³³

Rounder’s reports reveal that he remained in contact with Mr. F., with whom he became friends. When Mr. F., owner of a travel agency based in Hannover, offered him a job, Rounder reported the situation as every honest and reliable agent would have done. He also reported regularly on their friendly meetings.³⁴

Before leaving Hungary on 4 May 1961, Rounder was given an employment plan which stated his new tasks: his primary undercover activities were to focus on Austrian and West German travel agencies that organized trips to Hungary, report on foreigners intending to travel to Hungary (and devote particular attention to any traces of counter-intelligence), and collect data on suspicious people.³⁵ However, agent Rounder (who by this time was officially recorded under the code name) was not informed about the fact that another undercover agent had also been stationed at the same IBUSZ office. Both agents had as their secondary task the observation of their fellow colleagues. Thus state security could put the reliability of both agents to the test.³⁶

In November 1964, Rounder was called back to Budapest, where he was put in charge of the coordination of IBUSZ's so-called "West German branch," which was responsible for the organization of inbound tourism from Switzerland, Austria and West Germany.³⁷ In 1968, a report was written on Rounder's career as an agent. The document praises his reliability, his aptitude as an agent of the state security and his suitability as someone who could work from abroad (the West!) as a relocated informer. At IBUSZ, his superiors were planning to put him in administrative charge of their freshly opened Frankfurt office as deputy leader of the bureau.³⁸

Parallel to his appointment, another summary report was being written, and a training and briefing plan concerning his relocation to Frankfurt was also drafted. Rounder's case was taken over by Department III/I., that is, by the Hungarian intelligence. In addition to his original tasks, he was assigned new ones, such as the detailed mapping of the cities he visited, (like Munich, Cologne, or Stuttgart), the visual observation of police and military facilities, and the collection of information related to politics and economy—tasks falling more within the range of intelligence.³⁹ In one of his first reports, Rounder wrote about how one of his West German colleagues had arranged for Rounder's daughter to get a job at the IBUSZ office in Frankfurt in exchange for organizing a reasonably priced holiday at Lake Balaton for him.⁴⁰

The last documents in Rounder's B-file are mainly about his family's desertion. On 18 March 1969, Department III/II. (counter-intelligence) received news that Rounder and his family had disappeared: "'Cpt. Nr. 8. 'SZT'⁴¹ reported to have received a phone call from the office manager of the IBUSZ office in Frankfurt. The office manager suspected that U. F., an employee of the branch, and his family must have deserted. He moved out of his apartment and never showed up at the IBUSZ office."⁴²

One day later, Department III/I., the intelligence service, prepared a report that reveals that Rounder and his family's desertion was scheduled for 15 March and may have been carefully planned: "As far as we can tell, U. took advantage of his superior's absence and prepared his move during this time. He sent the keys of the IBUSZ office back to his workplace by post in a sealed envelope. Prior to leaving his apartment in Frankfurt, he had made sure to transport all his personal belongings; he terminated the tenancy of the apartment in a letter."⁴³

The final report reveals information that homeland security had gathered on the Rounder family's life in Germany. As it turns out, it was not easy for Rounder to find a new job, in spite of the fact that he possessed excellent knowledge of local conditions, work experience and high level language skills. Travel agencies that organized holidays and trips to Hungary were in a legal relationship with IBUSZ. These agencies could not risk damaging their relationships with institutions in Hungary by employing a deserter. In the end, Ú. F. found a job at a company that specialized primarily in air travel, and he maintained no direct contacts with the Hungarian monopoly travel service.⁴⁴

Yet, Rounder's finding a job is not the end of the story. On 22 April 1971, the Hungarian Ministry of Interior issued proceedings against the (absent) family on the grounds of suspicion of the "crime of refusing to return home."⁴⁵ Their personal belongings and real estate were officially seized and letters they exchanged with relatives living in Hungary were confiscated. The documents reveal the trauma of desertion and the ordeals faced by relatives who stayed behind. The family received a judicial confiscation order and was sentenced to prison in absentia. The man would have had to spend two years in prison, the wife twenty months, one of their daughters sixteen months and the other eighteen.⁴⁶

Reading the files concerning the career of agent Rounder, one might come to the conclusion that agents did not necessarily accept the role of informer for more than a decade

solely for the sake of a better income, better living conditions, and the chance to travel and become acquainted with lifestyles in the West, or even the possibility to flee. The decision taken by Rounder and his family to remain in the West as exiles does not seem to have been a spontaneous *acte gratuit*. Presumably, his support officers and superiors were deeply disappointed by the unfortunate turn of events, especially considering the fact that Rounder had proven a reliable partner for years. Reports giving accounts of his character emphasized his reliability precisely because of the fact that for more than a decade he never seemed even to consider the idea of desertion, although he could have absconded on many occasions. The complete history of Rounder's cooperation with the Hungarian state security gives one the impression that he took great care building bonds of trust over the course of the years. As a result, the vigilance of his superiors and colleagues waned, and so, by the time he and his family were already in Frankfurt, the plan to desert may well have been set in motion considerably earlier.

For years, Rounder strove to help his daughters learn German by arranging summer vacations and jobs for them in countries where German was spoken. The good relationship he maintained with Western travel agencies and his social network must have helped him and his daughters find new jobs after the family "took off." There is no evidence regarding the precise moment when Rounder might have come up with the idea of deserting to the West, or more precisely, of staying in West Germany for good.

On the other hand, one might interpret the story of Rounder, as it appears in the files, as an example of someone who used his language skills as cultural capital to get the attention of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior with the sole goal of strengthening ties with the state security in order to attain a more secure level of existence over time.⁴⁷ Finally, when he deserted to West Germany, he was able to use the cultural and social capital that he had

accumulated over the years spent working in Vienna and Frankfurt (i.e. fluency in German and an expansive social network).

This interpretative framework suggests that Rounder succeeded in converting social capital which he had been accumulating in the course of his cooperation with state security so as to attain a better social position. From this vantage point, his collaboration with the Ministry of Interior can be viewed as an existential strategy of capital accumulation. As an agent, Rounder was reliable and produced high quality reports, and this helped him climb higher in his career as a civilian, and his precision and apparent reliability regarding his secretly assigned tasks secured him a position at the IBUSZ office in Frankfurt. His decade-long devoted service to the state security won him the increased trust (or decreased distrust) of his superiors, which he managed to take advantage of in order to move his entire family to Frankfurt and start a completely new life.

During the years he spent in Austria and Germany, when only part of the family was allowed to stay abroad at any given time, his daughters had a chance to improve their German while finishing high school at home. The files contain letters documenting the preparatory steps that were taken to organize the family excursions. Not only did he manage to gain the trust of his superiors and obtain international professional experience and knowledge of local conditions, he also successfully secured education in the proper language environment for his daughters, and this was an important if not essential condition of starting afresh in Germany as a family.

Given that he worked as an agent for a decade, Rounder must have been familiar with and accustomed to writing reports and keeping in touch with his superiors on a daily basis. His work at the office involved lots of traveling. As a result, it cannot have been terribly difficult for him to acquire the necessary information and report it while fulfilling tasks connected to his official position. His professional skills and expertise as an agent of the

Hungarian security forces on the one hand and a travel agent on the other were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they reinforced each other. We do not know whether his family knew about his secondary “job.” Neither do we know exactly when he decided to leave the country for good. Yet, the files do show that he was systematic in his preparation for the move to Germany, first as a Hungarian employee at IBUSZ, then as someone working for a German office.

Bourdieu’s theory maintains that “the convertibility of the different types of capital is the basis of the strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital (and the position occupied in social space) by means of the conversions least costly in terms of conversion work and of the losses inherent in the conversion itself (in a given state of the social power relations).”⁴⁸ Consequently, “social capital (...) necessarily entails the risk of ingratitude, the refusal of that recognition of nonguaranteed debts which such exchanges aim to produce.”⁴⁹ So, if one supposes that Rounder’s collaboration with the state security is an example of social capital conversion, than his taking advantage of the capital accumulated through the years – for the sake of a higher social position both for himself and his family – can be interpreted as a conversion strategy carried out at the expense of the State.

The files allow us to suppose that he was consistent in his strategy of regaining the social position his family had previously lost through capital reconversion. First, he used his own language skills. Then, he signed up to become an agent out of his own accord. Later, he deliberately used his professional skills to climb the professional ladder. Although we do not know how the family managed after they decided to remain in West Germany, the files documenting the twelve years Rounder spent working as an agent testify to his conscious and successful implementation of a plan for capital conversion.

Stasi-Control of East German Tourists in Hungary

The boost in Hungarian tourism was fuelled by one specific group of inbound tourists in particular: German families and friends who were separated by the border between East and West Germany and who took advantage of a holiday at Lake Balaton to see one another. After the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, relationships between friends and families living on either side of the Iron Curtain could only be maintained outside the borders of the two Germanies. At the same time, in the early 1960s standards of living in Hungary began to improve, if only relatively (as compared to other Socialist states). As part of the process, by the end of the decade, household farming, self-employment, and local branches of farmers' cooperatives were partly legalized by the State.⁵⁰ The opening up of possibilities ensured that, as opposed to most Socialist countries, Hungary was more "Western" in that it was better able to meet Western expectations and satisfy Western tastes, thus dazzling both tourists from the West and tourists from other socialist countries who spent their holidays in the country.⁵¹

From the 1970s on, East German families showed an ever increasing tendency to take private car trips to such hugely popular destinations as Hungary and, more specifically, the villages around Lake Balaton. Motivated by the financially reasonable, even low costs of a holiday in Hungary, East German tourists preferred to put up tents at camps or look for private accommodation, relaxing a little bit and assuming that, at least temporally, they had managed to leave behind the ever-present surveillance by guides and agents.

However, East German tourists coming to Hungary were monitored closely and on a regular basis, since the leadership of the GDR and the Stasi considered any trip to any socialist state bordering a Western block country as a potential attempt at illegal border crossing.⁵² Indeed, a large number of GDR citizens attempted to flee to a Western country through so-called friendly socialist countries. Still, not all people on holiday had such plans. Owing to its geographical position, Hungary provided excellent conditions for such attempts.

As a result, the Stasi monitored the area (including Lake Balaton) with close scrutiny, whence the expression “the extended Berlin Wall.”⁵³

In 1964, a cooperation agreement between the state security departments of the two friendly states gave legal authorization to the so-called operational group of MfS to dwell in Hungary. The group’s main objectives included the control of East German tourists crossing the Hungarian border, the detection of planned crimes (typically, illegal border crossing), and the continued surveillance of East German citizens who were under regular surveillance in their home country as well.⁵⁴

A Full-Time Informer of the Stasi at Lake Balaton

Unofficial collaborators employed by operational groups were usually deployed seasonally. Officers of Stasi’s professional staff were also deployed during their summer holidays, if spent at Lake Balaton. In addition, in the 1980s, so-called full-time IMs also came to be deployed.⁵⁵ Conceptually, the notion of a full-time, that is to say, “official unofficial” collaborator is a contradiction in itself—a term that did not exist in the dictionary of Hungarian state security. Yet, from the 1960s on, it was a well-known and definitely existing employment category with the MfS. Full-time IMs received a monthly income from Stasi while being employed at a cover position by firms and companies of crucial importance with regards to state security. Their daily work and tasks were basically determined by the MfS, so they could not be hired without the general managers of a given work place knowing it.⁵⁶

In the following, I am going to discuss the case of an East German couple who worked as full-time IMs for the Stasi, spending their holidays at Lake Balaton from 1985 on, on a full-time basis. The career of agent “Klaus Heinig” is interesting from a similar point of view. It shows how being an agent could become a life-course strategy so as to secure financial

stability and a rather comfortable life for a family in the GDR, which began to show symptoms of shortage economy with increasing frequency.

The main objective of their holidays was to keep an eye on people who had already caught the attention of the Stasi in the GDR, to report on their Western connections, to make friends with targets selected for them by their LOs⁵⁷ for observation, and to document everything in detail. The reports, like operations reports, offer snapshots of the golden age of tourism at Lake Balaton, contemporary Hungarian living standards, and the vanished world of East and West German family reunions. Moreover, the reports testify to the intensity of the Stasi's presence in Hungary, the absurdity of their impertinence in wanting to know everything, and the maniacal, paranoid recording of unplanned crimes brought to life through the twisted logic applied by GDR state security.

Informer "Klaus Heinig" agreed to become an unofficial collaborator in 1968 when he was working at the GDR's state-run shipping company.⁵⁸ That same year, he became an official IM. As subsequent files show, from 1973 to 1979 he worked from "the non-Socialist abroad," that is, in West Germany, where he was employed undercover as a mechanic at a pulp and paper plant.⁵⁹ His wife at the time was also an informer of the MfS. Also, their son was born in West Germany. However, in 1979, "Klaus Heinig" was caught red-handed by the West German police and was sentenced to serve thirty-nine months in prison. In 1980, he was pardoned and sent home in the cadre of an exchange of prisoners agreement signed between the two Germanies.⁶⁰ The summary report on his activities emphasized his "impeccable political and operational performance," bravery, exemplary reliability, efficiency and virtues as an agent, such as calmness, serenity, and precise and punctual working methods.⁶¹

In June 1985, Heinig was given a job by Department VI of travel and tourism control. His primary task was to help the East German Travel Agency (Reisebüro der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, RDDR) recruit new employees and regional representatives during

the fall and winter season, that is, to run state security check-ups on potential appointees.⁶² In addition to his main duties, he was also deployed in the summers, usually during the peak of the tourist season, in socialist countries to which East and West German tourists were likely to travel in high numbers on a regular basis. He was also commissioned to escort groups that counted people under operational surveillance among their members. Thus, observation of the whole group of tourists as well as that of the target was made simpler and easier to carry out.⁶³

After taking over of HIM “Klaus Heinig” in 1985, Department VI prepared a year-long training plan for the informer. During a series of short training sessions, “Heinig” was deployed for the first time in 1986.⁶⁴ His first mission in Hungary was carried out in August 1986 in Budapest, where he arrived traveling in his own car on 4 August. He had to meet an officer of the Hungarian operational group of the Stasi at the parking lot of Hotel Novotel at 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon. At the time, the parking lot of Novotel was widely known as the meeting point of West and East German families and friends arriving by car, who usually continued their trip to Lake Balaton together from there on route M7.

The summary report on the first mission of “Klaus Heinig” also reveals that, in addition to his monthly salary, his expenses were fully covered by the Stasi during his twenty-day-long stay in Hungary. He received per diems, refunds for fees for legal documentation, gas money to cover his trip in the GDR and through Czechoslovakia, and insurance, all of which added up to a sum that equaled his monthly income.⁶⁵

The file containing the official IM’s reports reveals that in 1986 “Klaus Heinig” already carried out his first mission in Hungary, together with his partner. Informer “Claudia Kaufmann” worked as an unofficial collaborator for the MfS.⁶⁶ During their three-week deployment, the couple met their operations officer six times and handed over a total of eight reports.⁶⁷ The reports reveal that every evening, the couple visited the bigger and better-

known Budapest hotels, restaurants, sights and parks where East and West German tourists were likely to show up.

During the preparation for the tourist season in 1987, at the end of March, not only did the MfS plan “Klaus Heinig”’s mission, but “Claudia Kaufmann”’s employment was also taken over by the operations group responsible for monitoring Hungarian tourism.⁶⁸ “Claudia Kaufmann” had been an unofficial collaborator of the MfS since 1983. The fact that Department VI. (tourism) took responsibility for her deployments implies that the move also served a strategic scheme to prevent “Klaus Heinig”’s “unmasking.” Thus, as of 1988, she worked full-time at the RDDR, which made sure it was absolutely normal for her to spend most of the holiday season abroad.⁶⁹

The couple’s first official deployment was scheduled for August 1987 at the “Youth” camp of Balatonszemes. The plan, which was ready by March, provided a minute description of the time, location and passwords of their meeting with the operations officer at Siófok.⁷⁰ The deployment schedule included the detection of any sign of preparation for illegal border crossing and the detection of moves and behavioral patterns that might be of operational importance from the perspective of anti-state activity. Apart from this, the couple had to report on the general mood among tourists and the opinions of Hungarians regarding the GDR citizens they observed. They also had to comply with requests issued by other MfS divisions on the personal control of operations officers.⁷¹

As opposed to the plan, the working file reveals that the couple was already on “holiday” in Fonyód between 12 and 31 July 1987, accommodated at a private apartment.⁷² The unexpected location of their lodgings is explained by the nature of their mission. They were to monitor a specific individual whose accommodation at Lake Balaton was known to the MfS. Thus, it was important that the couple be located near the target, as this would make

it seem natural, not suspicious, for them to be a frequent nearby presence or for them to approach him as if casually.⁷³

Altogether sixteen reports were written that provide a detailed description of the strategic observation of target “Zwerg” (code name), a plot worthy of a spy movie. The series of meaningless scenarios offers glimpses into how the Hungarian divisions of MfS worked in reality.⁷⁴ The manner in which the couple established contact with the target family testifies to terrifyingly innate levels of professionalism. The IM observed the house rented by the target and then asked for help finding a house for rent in the neighborhood, preferably right across the street from the target’s lodgings. The second report gives an account of how “Klaus Heinig” managed to lay hands on the apartment that proved to be the most suitable from an operational point of view and how he tried to get in contact with the target family for the first time.⁷⁵

According to the subsequent reports, which chronicled each and every moment of the holiday, as of the fourth day of Claudia Kaufmann’s arrival the couple and the target family regularly went to the beach together and spent nights out together.⁷⁶ During the two-week-long operational control, the couple not only wrote reports, but also prepared two summaries on the evaluation of the target, including amendments by both IMs.⁷⁷ The characterization of the target informs the reader that “Zwerg” was a friendly though thoroughly introverted person whose political opinions were difficult to pinpoint and with whom it was impossible to enter into a debate. His primary concern was his LP collection, though he did not talk about it much either.⁷⁸

The two summary reports make it patently clear, had it not been obvious already, that the daily holiday activities of “Zwerg” and his family had nothing whatsoever to do with illegal operations or secret Western connections. The remarkable evidence of “nothing” might lead one to ask whether it was worth it to the state to finance the two-week-long holiday of

the IM couple only to receive reports and detailed information regarding families relaxing on terraces or having fun on the beach. However, the IMs' holiday did not end with the departure of the "Zwerg" family.⁷⁹

Reports on the Balaton mission of 1988 do not focus on one sole target. Rather, the documents reveal that the agents were involved in a series of observations that were carried out at the same time. Most of the reports can also be found in a file containing operations control reports,⁸⁰ which helps one assemble the mosaic pieces of separate cases. Even so, it is difficult to put together a continuous story. Very often, the motivations behind and consequences of the monitoring processes that extended beyond the borders of the GDR are unclear.

According to the summary report evaluation of the season, "Klaus Heinig" handed in a total of nine reports concerning six independent cases, two of which involved the task of personal observation taken over from MfS units.⁸¹ As usual, the reports were written with great precision and contained detailed descriptions of the daily lives of the people on holiday. There is very little information that could be deemed relevant from an operational point of view. One of the IM's missions was to observe a woman who worked as a tour guide in Balatonföldvár and with whom "Klaus Heinig" tried to get in touch by asking her out on a date and making her an offer. Despite his expectations, however, the informer received an unambiguous rejection, which, of course, he recorded in detail.⁸²

In the summer of 1989, on two separate occasions (first at the end of May and then at the end of June), "Klaus Heinig" spent three weeks in Hungary, deployed at camp grounds Sellő and Aranypart. In the "fatal" summer, he had already left the country by 16 July. As a result, he was not there anymore to report on the events of August and early September, or on the escalation of tension in the camps.⁸³ His tasks were similar to the assignments received in

previous years. “Klaus Heinig” had to carry out the operational observation of two targets, and he handed over eleven reports recording the cases.⁸⁴

The reports from June and July do not hint at the events that would later take place. Looking into the files, one finds the same monotonous descriptions of East and West German families spending their holiday together, including details such as East and West German cars parked next to each other and East and West German children playing together. It is only in the report written on 30 June that something of interest was noted. Two young East German men were looking for someone who could help them acquire West German passports in order for them to be able to leave the country for Austria. The unofficial informer gained access to this piece of knowledge because he was invited for a glass of champagne by one of the two gentlemen, who inquired whether he, IM “Klaus Heinig,” could be of any assistance regarding the matter of obtaining a passport.⁸⁵

The last document in full-time IM “Klaus Heinig”’s personal case file originates from 1 December 1989. It is the mandatory form for officially closing unofficial relations with MfS, stating the termination of his employment at the Stasi after twenty-one years of collaboration.⁸⁶ “Klaus Heinig” worked for the MfS as an informer for more than two decades and became a successful full-time IM of the GDR through the incorporation of cultural capital, and the successful acting upon his internal personal characteristics. His career as an informer did not imply the sort of systematic and conscious accumulation of cultural and social capital for the sake of his family or his own wellbeing which one finds in the case of “Rounder,” who took full advantage of capital conversion in order to desert the country he had previously served.

Yet, “Klaus Heinig”’s base of livelihood was precisely the incorporated cultural capital that he accumulated over the course of twenty-one years. Thus, he became an ever higher ranking informer because he reaped the benefits of professional experience and continuously

enhanced his professional skills through collaboration with GDR state security. His reliability, courage, precision and efficiency were rewarded by “easy” assignments and better remuneration. If one thinks about it, the status of GDR informers stationed in West Germany is clearly incomparable to that of IMs deployed at Lake Balaton. On the basis of “Klaus Heinig”’s files, it can be assumed that his livelihood strategy was essentially built upon his collaboration with East German state security.

Conclusions

The secondary literature on agents who cooperated with state security forces mostly deals with statistical data, facts, methods, and means of reporting and keeping in touch. These texts are primarily about the history, structure, methods and workings of the state security.⁸⁷

However, questions pertaining to the moral background of becoming and being an agent have been dealt with almost exclusively in imaginative, not scholarly literature.⁸⁸ Still, in the files, we are more prone to find details on remuneration than on the small yet important advantages that collaborators enjoyed because of their collaboration with the state. Bourdieu’s theory of capital conversion as an analytic framework to reveal agents’ conscious or unconscious strategies of capital conversion might help us understand their choices. Yet, the theory’s application as a methodological tool would be inapt in quantifying the (personal or family) advantages resulting from cooperation with state security.

The careers I have presented here show how collaboration with the state security can be interpreted as a strategy of social or, in this specific case, “collaborational” capital accumulation. The careers and lives of the two agents analyzed above share several characteristics. Both cases feature a man or a breadwinner as the protagonist who is influenced in his decision to enter into the service of the state by existential considerations.

Both men observed travel plans and holiday-making “in-the-act,” reporting on their fellow citizens, who were unsuspecting as they prepared for or spent their holidays in the West, or, in the case of East German tourists, in what was perhaps the most “Western” socialist country, Hungary.

Their lives only differ in one aspect. Whereas Rounder worked full-time for IBUSZ and his career as an informer was unofficial part-time work, “Klaus Heinig” was employed as a full-time IM (HIM) by the MfS, and as opposed to Rounder, in his case his job at RDDR was his secondary employment. Nevertheless, both men gained their position at their respective state’s travel service, IBUSZ and RDDR, through their collaboration with state security. Thus, both informers’ families could enjoy the benefits of financial and existential security because of the breadwinners’ cooperation with the state.

Normally, if we look at files of average informers, it is very difficult to separate existential and social benefits (e.g., promotion, getting an apartment, etc.) resulting from collaboration with state security. In the case of full-time informers, however, their daily lives and existences depended entirely upon their work for the intelligence. Reading the files of the two informers, one clearly sees that both men remained in contact with the state security for so long because of the existential benefits. One of them used the relationship to plan his escape to the West, while the other found safety and comfort in accomplishing his assignments. However, I assume that their ultimate goal must have been to secure an income, create a solid financial base for themselves and their families, and (in the case of Rounder) secure a potentially better future for their children.

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² Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in J. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1986) 241-258.

³ Ibid., 241-242.

⁴ Ibid., 241-242.

⁵ Ibid., 244.

⁶ Ibid., 249.

⁷ Idegenforgalmi, Beszerzési, Utaztatási és Szervezési Vállalat, IBUSZ (Tourism, Procurement, Travel and Management Company). After the nationalization of companies (gradually from 1948 on), IBUSZ became the company handling everything related to tourism. As part of Department VII. of the Ministry of Transport and Post, IBUSZ also functioned as the state organization responsible for regulating Hungarian tourism. Kudar, Lajos, *Az IBUSZ története, 1902–1992* [History of IBUSZ, 1902–1992] (Budapest, 1992), 25.

⁸ The Hungarian State Security was part of the Ministry of Interior (BM) of the People’s Republic of Hungary (PRH) from 1957. Gergő Bendegúz Cseh, A magyar állambiztonsági szervek intézménytörténeti vázlata, 1945–1990 [An Outline of the Institutional History of Hungarian State Security Services 1945–1990], in György Gyarmati, ed., *Trezor I. A Történeti Hivatal évkönyve 1999*. [Treasury 1. Annals of the History Office, 1999] (Budapest, 1999), 79.

⁹ Ministry of State Security (MfS) of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), better known as the Stasi.

¹⁰ For instance: see the files *Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (ÁBTL, Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security Services)* 3.1.5.O-17243/4. “West

German line, outbound and incoming tourism from and to the territory of the Mór and Sárbogárd districts,” and ÁBTL. 3.2.5. O-8-121-1, 2 and 3: “Hostile Swabian organizations operating in the FRG” comprising three parts.

¹¹ Géza Rehák, „’Szállodaiparunk és idegenforgalmunk fejlesztése tárgyában soron kívül teendő intézkedések,’ avagy a Kádár-korszak turizmusának első lépései” [‘Measures To Be Taken with Regard to the Development of the Tourist Industry in Hungary,’ or the first steps towards tourism as an industry in the Kádár era], *Debreceni Szemle* 3 (2007): 331–33.

¹² Zsolt Krahulcsán: “A nemzetközi kapcsolatok állambiztonsági szabályozása 1961–1965” [Regulation of International Relations by the State Security 1961–1965], *Betekintő* 2 (2008), www.betekinto.hu (accessed 1 October 2015), 22 July 2013.

¹³ Cseh, 1999, 77; 80.

¹⁴ Krahulcsán, 2008.

¹⁵ ÁBTL 1.11.9 box 40 J/3, 34-322-68, 34-154-1974 and 34-53/1973

¹⁶ OSA Online Archives, collection of instructions by the Ministry of Interior, 10-61/2/1961.

¹⁷ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-13535 “Berlini”, 20-29.

¹⁸ The so-called “IBUSZ” files: ÁBTL M- 27420 “Sós Irén”; ÁBTL Bt- 916. “Bánkúti”; ÁBTL Bt-1013. “Rounder”; ÁBTL Mt-203 “Rounder”; ÁBTL Bt-235 “Sheperd”; ÁBTL Mt-576 “Sheperd.”

¹⁹ The IBUSZ office in Vienna was founded between the two World Wars. During the years of nationalization, it became the sole Western office of the travel service, which by then was owned entirely by the state. In the 1950s, its tasks were limited to dealing with Austrian train tickets, since there was no inbound tourism in Hungary to speak of. Österreichisches Staatssarchiv (OeSta) AdR AA Wpol box 1949/108. file nr. 115.919; 121.254 and 138.462.

²⁰ ÁBTL Bt-1013. “Rounder”; ÁBTL Mt-203 “Rounder”; ÁBTL Bt-235 “Sheperd”; ÁBTL Mt- 576 “Sheperd.” Géza Rehák, „Rounder és Sheperd jelenti Bécsből. Adalékok az IBUSZ

és az állambiztonság kapcsolatához” [Rounder and Sheperd Reports from Vienna. Notes on the Connections between IBUSZ and State Security.], *Kommentár* 5, no. 4 (2010): 91.

²¹ ÁBTL Bt-1013/1. and 2. “Rounder” file.

²² For instance, the doorman of Hotel Lídó in Tihany functioned as a “social assistant.” His tasks included the gathering of data and the close observation and reporting on Western tourists’ every move. He was also responsible to let operations officers into clients’ rooms (while they were on a longer trip, for example) to set up the monitoring system. ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-13535 “Berlini” 20-29.

²³ Although I find the popular claim which states that all tourists guides and group leaders of Hungarians travelling to the West, as well as leaders of groups of Westerners coming to Hungary, were agents employed by their respective country’s state security highly exaggerated, the claim has an undeniably firm basis.

²⁴ ÁBTL Bt-1013/1. “Rounder” 12.

²⁵ I have no intention of revealing the true identity of agents and collaborators or of their families or colleagues. Consequently, I use initials and code-names as present in the files so as to indicate the “protagonists” of the cases I analyse.

²⁶ Cseh, 1999, 78.

²⁷ Magyar Filatélia Vállalat

²⁸ ÁBTL Bt-1013/1. “Rounder” 12.

²⁹ Cseh, 1999. 79.

³⁰ ÁBTL Bt-1013/1. “Rounder” 12.

³¹ Ibid., 11.

³² Ibid., 45.

³³ Ibid., 69–72.

³⁴ ÁBTL Mt-203 “Rounder” 49; 55; 92.

³⁵ Reports on his work from 1962 to 1964 at the Vienna office as well as evaluations on Rounder himself are found in the agent's working file. ÁBTL Mt-203 "Rounder" 47–171; ÁBTL Bt-1013/1. "Rounder" 73–74.

³⁶ Ibid., 113.

³⁷ Ibid., 156–57; 170.

³⁸ Ibid., 156–57.

³⁹ ÁBTL Bt-1013/1. "Rounder" 217–19; his reports written in Frankfurt are found in the second file: ÁBTL Bt-1013/2. "Rounder"

⁴⁰ ÁBTL Bt-1013/2. "Rounder" 6–8; a hand-written version of the report is also to be found in: ÁBTL Mt-203 "Rounder" 218–21.

⁴¹ Referring to the fact that the information is from a so-called 'SZT', Top Secret officer, possibly he was the head of the IBUSZ bureau in Frankfurt working also as a top secret undercover officer. Cseh, "A Történeti Hivatal irataiban leggyakrabban előforduló állambiztonsági rövidítések, kódok feloldása" [The Most Often Used Abbreviations of the State Security Files of the History Office], 301.

⁴² ÁBTL Bt-1013/2. "Rounder" 76.

⁴³ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁵ ÁBTL V- 154843 "U. F. and company" 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 82–130.

⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in J. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1986), 241–42; 244; 249.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 254.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 254.

⁵⁰ Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. Században* [The History of Hungary in the 20th Century] (Budapest, 2002), 427; 442; 454.

⁵¹ Sándor Horváth, “Aping the West in Hungary: ‘Fridge Socialism’ and the Making of the ‘Teenager’,” in Oliver Kühschelm, Franz X Eder, Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Konsum und Nation: Zur Geschichte nationalisierender Inszenierungen in der Produktkommunikation* (Bielefeld, 2012), 279–302.

⁵² Jens Gieseke, *Der Mielke-Konzern. Die Geschichte der Stasi 1945–1990* (Munich, 2001), 175.

⁵³ Monika Tantzsch, *Die verlängerte Mauer. Die Zusammenarbeit der Sicherheitsdienste der Warschauer-Pakt-Staaten bei der Verhinderung von “Republikflucht.”* (Berlin, 2001), 7–23.

⁵⁴ Krisztina Slachta, „A Stasi operatív csoportja Magyarországon 1964–1989“ [Stasi’s Operational Group in Hungary, 1964–1989], in Magdolna Baráth–Gábor Bánkuti–János Rainer M., eds., *Megértő történelem. Tanulmányok Gyarmati György hatvanadik születésnapjára.* [Understanding History: Studies on the Occasion of the Sixtieth Birthday of György Gyarmati] (Budapest, 2011), 101–112.

⁵⁵ HIM, that is, hauptamtlicher inoffizieller Mitarbeiter. Ralf Blum et.al., eds., *Abkürzungsverzeichnis. Häufig verwendete Abkürzungen und Begriffe des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit* (Berlin, 2009), 39.

⁵⁶ Roger Engelmann–Bernd Florath–Helge Heidemeyer–Daniela Munkel–Arno Polzin–Walter Süß, eds., *Das MfS-Lexikon* (Berlin, 2011), 138.

⁵⁷ Liason officers, that is, state security agent (German: Führungsoffizier) responsible for keeping in touch with agents, commissioning IMs to write reports, guiding their work and evaluating the reports. Roger Engelmann–Bernd Florath–Helge Heidemeyer–Daniela Munkel–Arno Polzin–Walter Süß, eds., *Das MfS-Lexikon* (Berlin, 2011), 91.

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- ⁵⁸ BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. I./1. 9.; 132.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 133.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 134.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 135–36.
- ⁶² BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. I./2. 38.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 39.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 63–64.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 69–70.
- ⁶⁶ BStU MfS AIM 12945/91. “Claudia Kaufmann” T.I./1. p.292; p.294.
- ⁶⁷ BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. II./6. 108.
- ⁶⁸ BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. I./2. 102.
- ⁶⁹ BStU MfS AIM 12945/91. “Claudia Kaufmann” T.I./1. 18–19.; 66–70; 274.
- ⁷⁰ BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. I./2. 102.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 103.
- ⁷² BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. II./6. 299–301.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 302.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 302–20.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 303.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 308; 311–12; 314–16.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 317–20.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 323–24., 326–28.
- ⁸⁰ BStU MfS HA VI. Nr. 4434.
- ⁸¹ BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. II./7. 136.
- ⁸² Ibid., 137.

⁸³ Ibid., 218.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 219–20.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 221–33; 235–236.

⁸⁶ BStU MfS AIM 15610/91. “Klaus Heinig” T. I./2. 73.

⁸⁷ For example: Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *IM-Statistik 1985–1989* (Berlin, 1993); Helmut Müller-Enbergs (in cooperation with Susanne Muhle), *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit, Teil 3: Statistiken* (Berlin, 2008).

⁸⁸ Cf. Julia Franck: *Lagerfeuer* (Munich, 2005); Anna Funder, *Stasiland. Europäische* (Hamburg, 2004); Susanne Schädlich, *Immer wieder Dezember* (Munich, 2010).